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TAGS: [EAID](#) [EU](#) [MR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UK](#) [XY](#)
SUBJECT: MAURITANIA/EU: APRIL GAERC CONCLUSIONS TO TAKE
"FIRM" LINE

Classified By: Political Counselor Richard Mills, reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C/NF) The April EU GAERC conclusions will have "firm" language on Mauritania, Foreign Office Mauritania Desk Officer Emily Summers told Embassies London and Nouakchott poloffs March 23. The European Commission (EC) report issued in early March recommends that Cotonou Agreement Article 96 consultations be closed and that "appropriate measures" be imposed to help restore Mauritania's democracy. After difficult EU discussions in which Germany, Spain, and Portugal advocated that the Article 96 consultation period be extended, Summers said GAERC language was agreed last week and is currently in silence procedure that will end the Cotonou Agreement consultations, call for continued political dialogue, suspend development assistance, and establish clear benchmarks for resumption of aid. EU humanitarian assistance will continue.

¶2. (C/NF) In a departure from most EC reports to members, Summers said the March Commission report also indicated that individual EU member states could consider targeted sanctions. The UK, according to Summers, supports targeted sanctions, but wants them imposed through the EU, as the impact would be more significant. She conceded, however, that many EU members, including Germany, Spain, and Portugal do not support sanctions, though she noted France seems supportive.

¶3. (C) Summers said the European Commission had been asked to observe the June 6 elections, but that the UK opposed an EU Observer Mission because there was not enough time to set up a "proper" elections observation mission and because it was clear that the elections already lacked credibility. She said the UK may support an EU elections observer mission in the future, but only if there is a more credible electoral process.

¶4. (C/NF) Summers noted that from March 2009 the British Embassy in Rabat will have a Second Secretary (FS-03 equivalent) working on Mauritania, with an aim to have the officer based in the European Commission office in Nouakchott by autumn 2009. She said the UK is particularly keen to have an officer based in country as European Heads of Mission based in Nouakchott appear to have "gone native."

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